NUMB. CXXI.

The GUARDIAN.

Hinc Exaudiri gemitus, iræque Leonum. Virg.

Thurſday, July 30. 1713.

Roarings of the Lion.

Old NESTOR,

‘EVER ſince the firſt Notice you gave of the Erection of that uſeful Monument of yours in *Button*'s Coffee-houſe, I have had a reſtleſs Ambition to imitate the renowned *London* Prentice, and boldly venture my Hand down the Throat of your Lion. The Subject of this Letter is a Relation of a Club whereof I am Member, and which has made a conſiderable Noiſe of late, I mean the Silent Club. The Year of our Inſtitution is 1694, the Number of Members twelve, and the Place of our Meeting is *Dumb's Ally* in *Holborn*. We look upon our ſelves as the Relicks of the old *Pythagoreans*, and have this Maxim in common with them, which is the Foundation of our Deſign, that *Talking ſpoils Company*. The Preſident of our Society is one who was born Deaf and Dumb, and owes that Bleſſing to Nature, which in the reſt of us is owing to Induſtry alone. I find upon Enquiry, that the greater part of us are married Men, and ſuch whoſe Wives are remarkably loud at home: Hither we fly for Refuge, and enjoy at once the two greateſt and moſt valuable Bleſſings, Company and Retirement. When that eminent Relation of yours, the *Spectator*, Publiſhed his Weekly Papers, and gave us that remarkable Account of his Silence (for you muſt know tho' we don't read, yet we inſpect all ſuch uſeful Eſſays) we ſeemed unanimous to invite him to partake our Secrecy, but 'twas unluckily objected, that he had juſt then publiſhed a Diſcourſe of his at his own Club, and had not arrived to that happy Inactivity of the Tongue, which we expected from a Man of his Underſtanding. You will wonder, perhaps, how we managed this Debate, but 'twill be eaſily accounted for, when I tell you that our Fingers are as nimble, and as infallible Interpreters of our Thoughts, as other Mens Tongues are; yet even this Mechanick Eloquence is only allowed upon the weightieſt Occaſions. We admire the wiſe Inſtitutions of the *Turks*, and other Eaſtern Nations, where all Commands are performed by officious Mutes; and we wonder that the polite Courts of Chriſtendom ſhould come ſo far ſhort of the Majeſty of Barbarians. *Ben Johnſon* has gained an Eternal Reputation among us by his Play called *The Silent Woman*. Every Member here is another *Moroſe* while the Club is ſitting, but at home may talk as much and as faſt as his Family Occaſions require, without breach of Statute. The Advantages we find from this Quakerlike Aſſembly are many. We conſider, that the Underſtanding of Man is liable to Miſtakes, and his Will fond of Contradictions, that Diſputes, which are of no weight in themſelves, are often very conſiderable in their Effects. The diſuſe of the Tongue is the only effectual Remedy againſt theſe. All Party Concerns, all private Scandal, all Inſults over another Man's weaker Reaſons, muſt there be loſt, where no Diſputes ariſe. Another Advantage which follows from the firſt, (and which is very rarely to be met with) is, that we are all upon the ſame Level in Converſation. A Wag of my Acquaintance uſed to add a third, *viz.* that, if ever we do Debate, we are ſure to have all our Arguments at our Fingers ends. Of all *Longinus*'s Remarks, we are moſt enamoured with that excellent Paſſage, where he mentions

Ajax's

(Price Two Pence.)